



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

MAN ARRESTED IN VIRGINIA FOR CONCEALING TIES TO MILITANT GROUPS; PRIOR BOMB-MAKING TRAINING IN HIS CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION

ALEXANDRIA, VA – Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, Allan J. Doody, Special Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Washington D.C., and Michael Mason, Assistant Director-in-Charge of the FBI Washington Field Office, announced the arrest of **Maher Amin Jaradat**, a 43-year-old Israeli-born Palestinian and naturalized U.S. citizen, pursuant to a federal indictment charging him with fraudulently procuring U.S. citizenship. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

Jaradat appeared at a detention hearing today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Barry Poretz in U.S. District Court in Alexandria and was detained. His arraignment is scheduled for June 13, 2005, before U.S. District Court Judge T. S. Ellis III. He was arrested on Tuesday, May 31, 2005, in Falls Church by ICE and FBI special agents assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). They also executed a search warrant at Jaradat's Falls Church residence.

On May 17, 2005, a federal grand jury in Alexandria returned a one-count sealed indictment charging Jaradat with unlawful procurement of citizenship. The indictment, which has been unsealed, alleges that Jaradat entered the United States in June 1988 as a visitor and later married an American citizen.

According to the indictment, Jaradat submitted an application for U.S. citizenship with immigration authorities in March 1995 and, in June 1995 appeared before immigration authorities where he swore under oath that the contents of the application were true, even though he knew the application contained false statements.

Specifically, the indictment alleges that Jaradat failed to disclose that he had been a member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) for 16 months beginning in 1980; that he had also studied bomb-making and the use of small arms at a DFLP training camp in Syria; and that he had engaged in security duties in Lebanon.

The indictment further alleges that Jaradat failed to disclose that, beginning in 1981, he had also been a member of al-Fatah, the military arm of the Palestinian Liberation Organization responsible for numerous terrorist attacks and airplane hijackings.

In addition, it is alleged that Jaradat falsely claimed that he had never been arrested, cited, charged, indicted, convicted, fined or imprisoned for breaking or violating any law or ordinance, when in fact, he had been arrested for assault and battery in the City of Alexandria in 1990.

U.S. Attorney McNulty said, "Our citizens have a right to know if an immigrant to this country has been associated with terrorist organizations. Catching and punishing those who enter this country under false pretense is a major element of our terrorism prevention strategy."

"U.S. citizenship is a privilege. Those who attempt to gain it through fraud, especially by concealing their affiliation with violent militant groups, will be pursued vigorously by ICE," said ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Doody.

This case was investigated by FBI and ICE special agents assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Force. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Gordon Kromberg and Special Assistant Heather Schmidt.

(It should be remembered that an indictment contains mere allegations against a defendant. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted in a court of law.)

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.